

REMARKS

The application identified above has been amended in response to the Office Action dated March 8, 2004. Claims 1, 6, 8-9, 11, 14-21, 25-26, 28-31 and 34-36 have respectively been amended herein to emphasize patentably distinguishing features of the invention, as well as to provide Applicants with the full scope of protection to which they deem their invention entitled. Claims 5, 7, 10, 23, 24, 27 and 37-45 have respectively been canceled herein.

Claims 1, 2-4, 6, 8-9, 11-22, 25-26 and 28-36 respectively remain pending in the application. Claims 2-4, 6, 8-9 and 11-20 respectively depend from independent Claim 1, and Claims 22, 25-26 and 28-36 respectively depend from independent Claim 21.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Applicants' Claim 1-9, 18-26 and 34-45 under 35 USC §103(a), as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,144,993, to Fukunaga et al., combined with U.S. Patent No. 6,029,092 to Stein.

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that Claims 10 and 27, as well as Claims 11-17 and 28-33, respectively contain allowable subject matter. Applicants, through their attorney, express appreciation to the Examiner for these statements. In accordance therewith, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable Claim 10, as well as the subject matter of intervening Claims 5 and 7. Accordingly, amended Claim 1, as well as Claims 2-4, 6, 8-9 and 11-20 respectively depending therefrom, are each considered to now be in condition for allowance. Claims 5, 7 and 10 have each been canceled, and Claims 6, 8-9, 11 and 14-20 have respectively been amended in view of such cancellations.

In like manner, Claim 21 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable Claim 27, as well as the subject matter of intervening Claims 23 and 24. Accordingly, amended Claim 21, as well as Claims 22, 25-26 and 28-36 respectively depending therefrom, are each similarly considered to now be in condition for allowance. Claims 23, 24 and 27 have each been canceled, and Claims 25-26 and 28-31 have respectively been amended in view of such cancellations.

In view of the amendments made herein, together with the Examiner's statements of allowability, the application is now considered to be in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully requested.

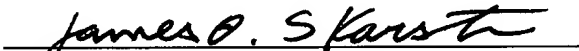
CONCLUSION

In light of the arguments set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that the Application is now in allowable form. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request consideration and allowance of the currently pending claims.

It is believed that no additional fees are due at this time. If this is incorrect, Applicants hereby authorize the Commissioner to charge any fees, other than the issue fees, that may be required by this paper to Deposit Account No. 07-0153. The Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants' Attorney for any reason that would advance the current application to issue. Please reference Attorney Docket No.126239-1003.

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Respectfully submitted,
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